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A.L.A. PUBLICATIONS
FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIESMARION HORTON, *Principal Los Angeles Library School*

SECOND GENERAL SESSION

Libraries are still in the dark ages, in spite of the fact that we have open shelves, generous rules for borrowers and publicity. Books are still chained because so few people know them in comparison to those who might know and love them. Librarians are responsible because we know that bibliography is the most fascinating pursuit in the world and yet we fail to communicate this belief to others. Library schools teach the joys of bibliography and in real life we make it peculiar, esoteric, impossible to share.

A reference librarian plans a travel program and does not give the club women a copy of *Viewpoints in travel*. The club women would adore this if they knew of it. It is as readable as any book of travel it describes. We have heard readers say with touching gratitude: "We never knew that catalogs or book lists were for us. We thought they were only for the librarians. Do you really mean that we can use them too?" Or a group of school librarians plans a list of science books. They have it ready for the printer before they discover that the Chicago high schools have already made an excellent list which would have made a good basis for their newer one. We could all multiply examples of such unnecessary duplication. We do not use the professional tools that we have made.

We admit that the tools are not always perfect ones; they are not always bright and they are not always sharp. It is improbable that a perfect bibliography will ever be made and we should guard against two common flaws. Often titles are copied without discrimination. We insert books again and again on different lists because they have appeared on some earlier list, not because we have examined them personally. We fail to suit our list to our readers and make the list either too austere or too mediocre.

We all know these things and it is a graceless thing to criticize, even in a family gathering like this one, unless a remedy can be offered. I have two very definite remedies to suggest—that we have specialists to make our lists, and once made, that we use them. I have asked many high school librarians what lists the A.L.A. might publish and I have a long list of subjects that are urgently needed. It is amazing and encouraging to see that there is an even longer list of just such material on these subjects already available in different libraries. All school libraries have the same demands for outside reading, Chaucer, Shakespeare, twentieth century novelists, short stories,—and we are wasting our energies in trying to cover all these fields individually. A few excellent lists have been published. School libraries everywhere are grateful to Miss Wilson for her fundamental list and to Mr. Certain for his *Standards*, but how many people know that material on *Ivanhoe* has been published in the *English Journal* and on the *Tale of two cities* and Irving in the *Wilson Bulletin*? Most schools go on making lists for *Ivanhoe* and Irving and Dickens instead of using these and going on to new fields. We hear Dr. Burton talk about open mindedness and public spirit and the world attitude, but we fail to apply it to our own profession and go on as isolated units, provincial, parochial, self-centered.

The remedy is obvious. The A.L.A. should be the clearing house. We should send a copy of every list made to Headquarters. We should write to Headquarters before making a new list to see if anything has been printed on this subject. This might be expensive, but it is worth the expense. A specialist in bibliography should be a member of the A.L.A. Headquarters staff and a fee might be charged for the information exchanged. We do not trust the judgment of every one about books, but this specialist should know books and their use in different types of libraries and be prepared to promote the exchange of ideas as the Smithsonian exchanges scientific information. We should let teachers and club women and the everyday public use lists. We should share

our own joy in books through bibliographies. We should share our belief that a bibliography is not a mere list without a soul; it

is something more than author, title, imprint and collation. It may be an open gate, a winding road, a window into the infinite.

A.L.A. PUBLICATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL LIBRARY

By ADELAIDE R. HASSE, *Editor, Special Libraries, Washington, D. C.*

SUMMARY. SECOND GENERAL SESSION

I speak as a free agent; I have not wanted to speak in any way involving or implicating either the Special Libraries Association or its journal.

The question that came to me was, What can the A.L.A. do in the way of publications for special libraries? I thought about it a good deal, and I have come to the conclusion that at the present time the A.L.A. can do nothing in the way of publications for special libraries, for two reasons:

The A.L.A. has for too long, too consistently had the public library point of view. Now that isn't saying anything derogatory to public libraries. They have a great mission; they are doing a wonderful work but it is just a little bit different in angle, in aspect from that of special library work. Therefore, until the A.L.A. point of view verges around a little bit more to that of the distinctively special library work, the A.L.A. cannot do anything in the way of publication that will be of benefit to special libraries. Another reason that the A.L.A. at the present time—I don't say you cannot in the future, but at the present time—cannot do anything that would be of any great benefit to special libraries is that we do not know quite yet, all of us do not understand just what a special library is.

There is special library work being done in what we call public libraries; that is generally the community library doing special community library work,—notably you see it in Indianapolis and in Newark, in the business branches of those libraries. There are other community libraries doing special community library work.

Among the distinctively special libraries there are libraries whose work is very much like that of the general community or, as you call it, public library, i. e., those special libraries in plants and corporations, which

cater to the employees of the corporation, and whose work is more nearly like that which may be called special welfare library work, where the circulation is chiefly fiction or recreational literature, or literature of an educational nature, concerned with the particular work of the employee.

Another sort of special library is what we at the present time term the technical special library. It is that special library which is very closely associated with the executive staff, or, if there is a technical laboratory in the plant, with the staff of the technical laboratory. That is the distinctively special library. Now of those technical special libraries there is a very great diversity. There are, for instance, soap manufacturers who have a special library; the rice people; the brass people; the aluminum industry, and many others that I could name that are distinctively special laboratory libraries.

Of course the law libraries which are organized; the state libraries which are organized; children's libraries,—they are all special libraries, but they are provided for in their organizations.

There is one thing, one common feature underlying the work of all the so-called special libraries: they are information factories. Now get me! I am not talking about journals or pamphlets, or books. I am talking about information,—the specific fact. It may still be in a man's brain, it may not yet have gotten into print; it may be in typewritten form only. I am talking about information. The distinctively special libraries have this in common, that they are information factories. Now if the A.L.A. can do this for these information factories, if the A.L.A. can put the fact in factory, I say go ahead; then you can do something for special libraries.

If the A.L.A. could establish some liaison